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MUSIC
AS A LANGUAGE

Oxford University Press
London Edinburgh Glasgow New York
Toronto Melbourne Bombay
Humphrey Milford *M.A. Publisher to the University*

1878

MUSIC AS A LANGUAGE

LECTURES TO MUSIC STUDENTS

BY

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45965

OXFORD
AT THE CLARENDON PRESS
1916

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PREFACE

The following lectures were delivered to music students between the years 1907 and 1915. They have been partly rewritten so as to be intelligible to a different audience, for in all cases the lectures were followed by a discussion in which various points not dealt with in the lectures were elucidated.

An experience of eight years in organizing a training course for students who wish to teach ear-training on modern lines to classes of average children in the ordinary curriculum of a school has shown me that the great need for such students is to realize the problems, not only of musical education, but of *general* education.

Owing to the nature of all art work the artist is too often inclined to see life in reference to his art alone. It is for this reason that he sometimes finds it difficult to fit in with the requirements of school life. He feels vaguely that his art matters so much more to the world than such things as grammar and geography; but when asked to give a reason for his faith, he is not always able to convince his hearers.

He feels with Ruskin that:

'The end of Art is as serious as that of other beautiful things—of the blue sky, and the green

grass, and the clouds, and the dew. They are either useless, or they are of much deeper function than giving amusement.'

But he has not always the gift of words by means of which he can describe this function.

We want our artists, and their visions, and those of them who can realize a perspective in which their art takes its place with other educative forces are among the most valuable educators of the rising generation.

ETHEL HOME.

KENSINGTON,
January, 1916.

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CHAPTER I

THE TRAINING OF THE MUSIC TEACHER

LET us consider the case of a young girl who has finished her school education, and has supplemented this by a special course of technical work in music, which has ended in her taking a musical diploma. She now wishes to teach. What are the chief problems which she will have to face? She must first of all make up her mind whether she wishes to confine her work to the teaching of a solo instrument, together with some work in harmony or counterpoint, along orthodox lines, or whether she wishes to be in touch with modern methods of guiding the *general* musical education of children, as taken in some schools in the morning curriculum. If the latter, she must enter on a course of special training.

There is also a practical reason why many who wish to teach music at the present time are entering a training department. In a paper recently issued by the Teachers' Registration Council we find the following paragraph dealing with 'Conditions of Registration':

'The applicant must produce evidence satisfactory to the Council of having completed successfully a course of training in the principles and

methods of teaching, accompanied by practice under supervision. The course must extend over a period of at least one academic year or its equivalent.'

Now, those who have studied the question of the teaching of music in accordance with modern methods have realized that music provides a *language*, which should be used primarily for self-expression and intercourse with others. The whole of life depends on the expression of ourselves in relation to the community. Self-expression is a universal instinct, which can only be crushed by a course of systematic ill treatment, either self-inflicted or inflicted by others. It is self-inflicted if we conform to false standards of convention, or create for ourselves a standard of life which is out of touch with humanity as a whole. It is inflicted by others if they force us when young into a wrong educational atmosphere, and paralyse our faculties instead of developing them.

To the favoured few real creative power comes by instinct, but to a great many a small degree of this power can be given by education, and in this way an extra outlet is possible for self-expression. The child should be trained when quite young to think in terms of music, in the same way in which it is trained to think in its mother-tongue. The fundamental work should be taken in class, not at an individual lesson, and should be compulsory for all children. We do not inquire whether a child is gifted in languages before we teach him French, and we must not ask whether he is gifted in the language of music before placing him in the

music class. Again, short frequent lessons are more beneficial to the young beginner than longer lessons at greater intervals, for, as a new 'sense' is being opened to the pupil, a long lesson produces an unhealthy strain.

The scheme of work to be followed in such a class will be dealt with later, but we may note here that training given in accordance with the above-mentioned aim will produce a marked increase in the vitality and general intelligence of a child. The reflex actions of intense concentration for a short time, followed by the giving out of creative work, will send a child back to its other lessons with an alert mind and with increased vigour.

A large number of schools and private families are offering posts to teachers who are able to teach along such lines. Every year the number of such posts steadily increases, and it will not be too much to predict that in the near future few schools in the first rank will be without teaching of this kind. The salaries offered are naturally higher than those obtained by the old-fashioned 'orthodox' teacher, as more has to be done, and classes have to be managed instead of individual pupils.

It is impossible to over-estimate the importance of securing plenty of experience in teaching classes of average pupils of all ages, under expert supervision. Many an apparently promising teacher has come to grief in the first post taken, because the knowledge gained has been too theoretical, and has not been checked by class experience with really average pupils. The question of discipline is an easy one

with an individual pupil, but in class work it assumes a different proportion.

For the purpose of teaching ear-training, without instrumental work, a high degree of musical gift is not necessary. Any one who is fond of music, sympathetic with children, and willing to work, can manage the course of work necessary before being able to teach classes up to a fair standard.

The work, which often appears bewilderingly difficult to one who sees it for the first time, becomes quite simple when approached step by step, and in company with fellow students. It is also interesting to know that some of the most satisfactory results obtained in certain schools during the last few years have been arrived at by teachers possessing only an average knowledge of an instrument, but who have thrown themselves with enthusiasm into the study of music as a living language. Such teachers are bound to succeed, because they are attacking the subject in a genuinely educational spirit.

A word now on another aspect of the question of training. There is going to be an enormous difference in the young girl's outlook on life. For perhaps the first time she has to adopt the attitude of the one who gives, not of the one who receives. Hitherto she has been receiving food, clothes, money, education, help in her difficulties, &c., and now, Fate waves a wand, and the child who has been the centre of interest in her home and in her school has to learn to give—and to give generously—as others gave to her.

For the real teacher is never paid for all she does.

Her salary is not augmented in proportion to all the extra help she gives to the backward or delicate pupil—to the hours of drudgery, outside school hours, willingly given in order to be prepared for every eventuality of school life. Such things are never paid for in money, the only reward is in the partial realization of the standard attempted.

Another point. The ideal teacher must have real personality, and this is a thing of slow growth, but which can be developed under expert guidance. There must be sympathy, tact, and humour. In adopting the attitude of the giver instead of the receiver the young teacher is too apt to put away the remembrance of childish difficulties, and to forget the restless vitality which made her, as a child, long to fidget, and do anything but learn.

There is another thing to bear in mind. The majority of amateurs are never subject to the same criticism as the professional. Everything is ' watered down '. ' Very good ' has often been the verdict of the critic, but an unspoken addition has been—' for an amateur '.

Now in a training department one of the most valuable points of the training consists in the outspoken comments. And this does not only refer to musical work, but to personal faults. We all know that if a mannerism does not interfere with the unity of a strong personality, it may be left alone. But there are some mannerisms which merely express the weaknesses of those who possess them, and which spoil the expression of the per-

sonality. These must be cured, and will be faithfully dealt with in the training department.

Lastly, if the course of training be taken in connexion with a school, opportunities will be afforded of getting an insight into general organization and schemes of work for children of all ages.

An accusation often levelled at the musical members of a staff is that they keep to themselves, and do not identify themselves with the general school life. In some cases this may be due to lack of willingness, but in the large majority it is due to lack of training in, and realization of, the unity of such life.

A student who takes every opportunity given to her during her year of training will not only learn how to organize the general musical life of a school, through the medium of ear-training and song classes, recitals, music clubs, &c., but will be ready and proud to show initiative in other directions.

We cannot do without the visions of our artists, and a country or a school is the poorer when full use is not made of the driving force of artistic inspiration.

CHAPTER II

THE ORGANIZATION OF MUSICAL WORK IN SCHOOLS

THE musical work in a school falls roughly into four divisions :

1. Ear-training, leading on in later stages to harmony, counterpoint, &c.
2. Voice production and songs.
3. Instrumental work.
4. Concerts, music clubs, &c.

To take these in order :

1. *Ear-training.*

When the necessity for this work has been realized the next step is to consider how the time can be found for it in the school curriculum. Those who have seen some of the results in schools which have taken the work for some years are sometimes inclined to think that a large expenditure of time has been involved. But, provided the children have begun the training when quite young, it is neither necessary nor desirable for them to have more than one forty-minute lesson a week after they have reached the age of twelve years. We must remember that in all ' language ' work the ideal plan is to begin with very short and fairly frequent lessons. Ear-training which is to be treated on the lines suggested will be opening up a new

' sense ' to the pupil, and the concentration necessary is such that the children cannot stand the strain of a long lesson.

The following lengths of lessons are therefore advisable :

For children from four to seven years of age, a quarter of an hour four days a week.

From eight to twelve years of age, twenty minutes three days a week.

From thirteen years of age upwards, forty minutes once a week.

Now as to schemes of work.

For those between the ages of four and seven the time should be spent in singing at sight easy melodies in major keys, and in ear tests of two or three notes at a time.

For those between eight and twelve sight-singing in minor keys and in two parts should be added, also the dictation of melodies and of two-part tunes. When this work is securely grasped the treatment of chords can begin, also extemporizing of melodies with the voice, together with transposition and harmonizing of easy phrases at the piano.

For children of thirteen years and upwards the above can be continued, together with sight-singing in three parts, dictation in three and four parts, extemporizing at the piano, and more definite work in harmony, counterpoint, and elementary composition.

After the age of fourteen it is well to make the work voluntary. By this time it is possible to distinguish between children who are sufficiently

interested in music to make it worth while for them to continue the work and those who will be more profitably employed in other directions. The latter will have learnt how to take an intelligent interest in music, and how to 'listen' when music is being performed. The classes will now become smaller, an advantage for the more detailed work.

It is important to note that the best results in ear-training will only be obtained if the classes do not exceed twenty-five pupils in number.

2. *Voice Production and Songs.*

These classes can be larger without prejudice to the work, but the above classification as to age is desirable. Children between four and seven years of age will probably learn songs connected with their kindergarten work, so it is difficult to say exactly the amount of time to be spent in song lessons, as the work will overlap. Those between eight and twelve should have one song and voice production lesson a week, of not less than twenty minutes. Those over thirteen will probably be working at more difficult songs, and will need not less than thirty minutes once a week.

3. *Instrumental Work.*

It is very desirable that all children up to the age of eight who are learning an instrument should do so in a *class* for the first year, rather than in individual lessons. Much of the fundamental work at an instrument can become wearisome to a young child unless taken in company with others of the same age.

A practical consideration involved is that this makes it possible to charge a smaller fee for each pupil, and this fact may influence a parent to let a child begin an instrument earlier than would otherwise be the case.

It has been found that children started in this way develop much more rapidly than if they had individual lessons. The stimulus of class work for the average child cannot be over-estimated.

When this preliminary year's work is over, the child can go on either to three twenty-minute lessons a week by itself, or two half-hours. If ear-training is being done at the same time, it is possible to shorten the amount of instrumental practice each day. In few cases should it be allowed to exceed half an hour up to the age of thirteen, and in many cases twenty minutes is found sufficient.

After the age of thirteen it is again possible, as was the case with the ear-training work, to distinguish between the musical children and the others. The former should increase the amount of practising each day; the latter, if they continue to learn, should not exceed half an hour. The piano lessons will in most cases consist of two half-hours a week.

4. *Concerts, Music Clubs, &c.*

It is a good plan to arrange for a short recital to be given every term, at which not only the more advanced pupils will play, but children at all stages of development. It is wise to insist on all music being played by heart, as in this way an invaluable training will be given from the very first.

In the case of a prize-giving or large school function it is of course necessary to show only the best work.

A music club is a great stimulus to the musical life of a school. A good plan is to arrange a series of short lectures on such subjects as the origins of harmony, acoustics, the chief difference between music of different schools and periods, &c., and to follow these by accounts of the lives and works of the great composers. Children are delighted to come to such meetings, especially if their aid be asked in illustrating the lectures by playing specimens of the music referred to.

In the organization of musical work in a school it is of the utmost importance that there should be a central musical authority, responsible for bringing all those engaged in the teaching into touch with each other. If this be done, not only will overlapping of work in the various classes and lessons be avoided, but a driving force of musical comradeship will be initiated which will produce a genuine musical atmosphere.

CHAPTER III

THE TEACHING OF VOICE PRODUCTION AND SONGS

It is perhaps more rare to find a successful teacher of songs than of any other subject in the school curriculum. There are many reasons for this. In many cases a visiting teacher takes the work, who finds it difficult to learn the names of all the children in one lesson a week, and who therefore starts at a disadvantage. Then the size of the class for songs is always larger than that of classes in other subjects, and there is therefore more inducement to inattention on the part of the children.

Nothing is more pitiful than to see a young, inexperienced mistress grappling with a large class of healthy, restless children, who know from experience that the weekly song lesson may be turned to good account for their own little games!

There is, of course, the born teacher, who sends an electric shock through the room directly she enters it, and who, without asking for it, secures instant silence and eager attention. Such people are rare, and it must be our task now to give a few practical suggestions to those less fortunate people who do not possess the innate gift, but who are willing to learn.

To begin with, the teacher of songs must have real personality; and if she does not possess this by

nature, she must do her best to develop what she has. She must be full of vitality, she must understand children, and, above all, she must be genuinely fond of music, in such a way that she cannot do without it. The last qualification often implies a certain sensitiveness, which finds a difficulty in accommodating itself to a workaday world, where people have little time, or inclination, to study the 'moods' of others. Very artistic people are a well-known difficulty to the authorities of schools. In order to excel in their art, they must not only have a 'capacity for taking pains', but a reserve store of emotional force, on which they draw for self-expression through their art. Now the possession of such a reserve store does not always imply a power of keeping it in reserve! During the course of training the attention of such people should be directed to the high ideals underlying all true educational work; they should realize the real function of music in education—that it is not to be taken as a mere accomplishment, or technical art, but as a means of self-expression.

We will now consider a special case. Let us suppose that a new mistress is taking a song lesson with a large class of children, who have the reputation of being troublesome to manage. On entering the classroom it is a good plan to go straight to the platform, without speaking a word to the children on the way, whatever they may be doing. From this vantage ground the teacher should look the class over for a few seconds, still without speaking. There is nothing more impressive to a restless class

than the sight of a mistress not in the least disturbed by their doings, yet taking everything in. If the mistress has cultivated a sense of repose and self-confidence this action on her part will produce the feeling of a centre of force in the room—and the force will radiate from her. The children, without knowing exactly what has happened, will feel different, and will be pliant and easy to manage. Directly the mistress is conscious of this change of atmosphere she can start the lesson. But she must now gradually merge her personality into that of the class—she must work *with* them, not outside them. It is difficult to put this idea into words, but all real teachers will see the meaning. There is no driving force to equal that which works from within a community—not from without.

Now for the lesson itself.

It should start with a few simple exercises in voice production. Excellent suggestions for these will be found in a little book called *Class Singing for Schools*, with a preface by Sir Charles Stanford, published by Stainer & Bell, also in the Board of Education Memorandum on Music. A special point must be dwelt on. Children should never be allowed to use the chest register. Their voices should be trained downwards. In the singing of scales there should be a leap to, or a start on, a note high enough to be out of the chest register—such as the high E♭. The descending scale should then be sung. Breathing exercises should be taken at the beginning of the lesson. A good exercise is to exhale on the sound 'sh'. The children will stand in easy positions

for this, the hands on the ribs, so that they can feel the ribs expanding and contracting during inhalation and exhalation. The shoulders should be kept down. The advantage in using the sound 'sh' is that the teacher can thereby tell how long each child makes its breath last.

When these exercises are finished, and a few scales and passages have been sung, the class should sit down while the teacher speaks about the new song to be sung. In schools where sight-singing is taken as part of the regular curriculum it is not necessary to work at this in the song class. In beginning a new song the chief thing is for the teacher to get the class to seize the spirit of it. If difficult words occur, they may be explained later, but it is absolutely essential that the children shall get hold of some idea which they can express in singing.

Mr. W. Tomlins, who came over from New York in order to show some of his methods for dealing with large classes, produced some admirable results. He worked up the enthusiasm of his classes to such an extent that the effect of their singing was electrical; and it was all due to the few words he said before the song was sung, not to any corrections he made later. It is not necessary for a teacher to *conduct* the songs all the time during the lesson, or the fact that the class is expected to watch the baton tends to make them rigid in their attitudes, and therefore, to a certain extent, in their singing. The best results are obtained when a class stands to sing. Some well-meaning teachers forget that the children have probably been sitting in their class-

rooms for the greater part of the morning, and are only too glad to stand for a change. They can sit between the songs, when finding their places, and so on.

Songs should be chosen in which the pitch is not too low. Many people have the mistaken idea that young children cannot sing high. Listen to their shouts in the playground, to the notes they use when calling to each other, and this idea will soon be corrected. The lowest note in the voice of a young child is generally E, and it can take the high F or G quite easily.

Droners should not be allowed to sing with the rest of the class, or the pitch will be lost at once, to say nothing of the spoiling of the general effect.

Flat singing is often due to bad ventilation of the room, more often still to boredom. A good plan in this case is to raise the pitch a semitone; it is often just as easy for singing, and invariably produces a sense of cheerfulness.

Children should never be allowed to sing loudly, especially when very young. It is most difficult to cure the habit when once formed. Attention should be paid to articulation from the very first. A useful lesson is taught the class if, from time to time, half of them go to the end of the room, and, with closed books, listen to their companions singing a verse of a song which is new to them. The difficulty they experience in following the words will not soon be forgotten.

Attacks should be absolutely precise. The two- and three-part contrapuntal singing which is done in the sight-singing classes is admirable for this, as

the whole effect is blurred or entirely spoilt in such clear-cut work by a false entry.

For all large school functions, such as a prize-giving, the songs should be sung by heart. This is not necessary in ordinary class work, as the aim there is to teach as many good songs as possible, in order to form a standard of real musical literature. But at the set performance nothing is more delightful than to see children rise, and, without any flapping of pages, or uncomfortable attitudes for seeing the words in a book, sing straight from their hearts. However simple the music or the words, the effect will be well worth the little additional trouble.

Our last consideration is that of the songs to be chosen to learn. Little children should rarely sing anything but unison songs. Folk-songs, such as those edited by Cecil Sharp and others, and, for the very little ones, traditional nursery rhymes and game songs are the best. From the ages of ten to fourteen years such books as Boosey's *National Songs* or *Songs of Britain* should be the staple work, while for older children the great classical songs may be added. A good book for these is the *Golden Treasury*, published by Boosey.

Songs by living composers should be strictly limited in number, though not excluded. These have not stood the test of time. We teach Shakespeare in our literature classes, not a modern poet—the essays of Bacon, not those of a modern essayist. And our reason is that the only way to create a standard of taste is to take our children to the classical fountains of prose and poetry. We must do the same in music.

CHAPTER IV

THE SOL-FA METHOD

To those who are not accustomed to the Sol-fa notation it appears at first sight a useless encumbrance. Excellent arguments are produced for this view. Many musical people can scarcely remember when they could not sing at sight and write melodies from dictation. They picked up this knowledge instinctively, and cannot see why others should not do the same. Unfortunately everybody has not proved able to do so, hence a multitude of 'methods' for teaching them.

The most familiar of these consisted in trying to teach the pupil to sing intervals, *as* intervals, at sight. Thirds, fifths, sixths, &c. were diligently practised. But pupils did not always find it easy to sing these intervals from all notes of the scale, unless in sequence. The major third from *doh* to *me* seemed easier than that from *fah* to *lah*, and so on. Thus in the majority of cases sight-singing in classes resolved itself into the musical children leading, and the others following. It is rare to find a large class in which there is not one musical child, and the only sure test of progress is to make the less musical children sing at sight alone from time to time.

Now, if those who have 'picked up' the knowledge of sight-singing without knowing how they did it be asked to explain how they arrive at their

intervals, it will be found that *tonality* plays a large part in their consciousness. In other words, they are perfectly certain of their key-note, and at any moment could sing it, even after complicated passages.

This fact is the root of the Sol-fa system. The child is taught to think of all the notes of the scale in relation to the key-note. A very sensible objection is sometimes raised to this, i.e. that it must surely entail a great deal of detachment from the matter in hand if the mind has to grope for the key-note between every two consecutive notes of a melody. But this process becomes automatic very quickly. We are not conscious of references to the multiplication tables every time we do a sum, yet we could not do the sum without these. And it is the same with the Sol-fa system. The child need very rarely actually *sing* the key-note when considering another note, she refers the latter to it unconsciously.

There is one curious anomaly in the orthodox Sol-fa system, which has caused a good deal of amusement to its critics, and has ended by causing a cleavage on the part of many who are otherwise in cordial agreement with the broad lines of the method. This is concerned with the treatment of the minor key. The orthodox Sol-fa teacher relates the notes of the minor scale, not to the key-note, but to the third of the scale, i.e. to the key-note of the relative major. The confusion which this plan produces in the sense of tonality can readily be imagined. When singing in major keys the pupils are told to refer all notes to the key-note for

'mental effect', but in the minor key this is strictly forbidden. To take an instance. In the scale of C major the child has been trained to feel the sharp, bright effect of the note G, the fifth from the key-note C. It would naturally feel the same effect for the note E in the key of A minor, when related to the key-note A. But the orthodox Sol-fa teacher says: 'No. You must feel the calm, soothing effect of E in relation to C!' Can the child be *really* trained in this way? If it were merely a difference in detail of the treatment of the two modes this error could be forgiven, but it is a difference in fundamental principle.

One of the many difficulties caused occurs in transposition on the piano. When transposing from, say, C minor to F minor, the child must first think in E♭ major, so as to get the pivot of reference, then in A♭ major for the new pivot A♭. Yet all the time its real sense of pivot, which, be it noted, has been admirably trained by the Sol-fa treatment of the major scale, is in favour of C and F respectively.

The method evolved for the minor key by those who wish to uphold the fundamental principle of the key-note being the pivot of reference for *all* keys, major and minor, is a very simple one. It consists in giving to the third and sixth of the harmonic form of the scale their logical names of *maw* and *taw*. The sixth of the ascending scale in the melodic form will of course be the same in the minor as in the major.

There are two other points in the orthodox Sol-fa

system which are modified by those who wish to use it as a crutch to staff notation. The first of these concerns the rather complicated time notation of all but the first sets of exercises. Directly subdivisions of the beat are introduced the notation becomes difficult to read without putting a strain on the eyes. The little dots, dashes, commas, &c., worry children. Experience has proved that when a class is ready for anything beyond the very simplest time values it can leave the Sol-fa notation altogether, and keep entirely to the staff notation. This is, of course, an advantage, and is what is being aimed at.

The other point is connected with the use of what are called ' bridge-notes '. When a modulation is introduced which entails a fairly long reference to a new key, the note leading directly to it is of course accidental in the first key and diatonic in the second. This is called a bridge-note, and must be thought of in two ways, first in the old key, then in the new. Thus its name must be changed, as a prelude to using the new pivot.

Now, in teaching staff notation it is neither wise nor necessary to introduce extended modulations very early. The aim is to make it possible for children to sing fairly easy melodies in all keys, major and minor, with incidental modulations, as soon as possible—then to revise the work, introducing more difficult modulations. This end will be attained by deferring the use of bridge-notes until the children are ready to sing melodies in the minor keys which modulate to the relative major.

If the above-mentioned plan for the treatment of the minor key be adopted, bridge-notes will be essential at this stage, and the melodies, at any rate at first, cannot be sung without their aid. A further reference to this matter is given in the chapter on the teaching of sight-singing.

CHAPTER V

FIRST LESSONS TO BEGINNERS IN EAR-TRAINING

THE form of these lessons will vary slightly according to the ages of the children. We will suppose these to lie between seven and nine years, when the children can read and write.

At the first lesson the scale of C major should be played, from middle C to high C, ascending only. Then repeat middle C, and stop on it a little. Do this three or four times, telling the children to count the notes as you play up the scale. When they are all sure that eight notes have been played, ask them why they think you repeated the middle C at the end. They will probably say: 'To make it sound finished.' In other words, they have grasped the 'mental effect' of the key-note *in every key*, the pivot round which the other notes revolve. Give the hand sign for this note, according to the Sol-fa plan, and tell the children that the note is called *doh*. Now repeat the scale, but this time play it from high C to middle C, repeating the high C at the end. The children will see at once what has happened, and that the high C now 'finishes' the passage. Thus it will be called 'high *doh*', and the hand sign will be repeated, but at a higher level. Be careful not to bend the hand at the wrist when

giving this sign, or the effect of finality and repose will be lost.

At the second lesson, repeat this work, the children telling you what to do. Then make eight large dots on the blackboard, and against the first and eighth of these write *doh* and *doh*^{1}. Now play the first five notes of the scale, and repeat the first as before. Ask how many notes were played. Then play them again, but starting from the fifth downwards, and repeat the fifth at the end. Ask the children why they think you did this. At first they will not be able to express what they feel, but gradually the idea will emerge that you want to call attention to something of interest. People often call to each other by singing up a fifth. The new note is sharp and bright in sound when related to the key-note. Hence the hand sign. Give the name *soh*, and write it against the fifth dot on the board. The children should now sing from the three hand signs known, also from the notes on the board. They should also identify the notes when played in groups of two and three on the piano.

When they can do all this easily, the next note, the third of the scale, is taken in the same way. The ' mental effect ' is calm and soothing, hence the hand sign. In addition to singing from the hand signs, and from the Sol-fa ' modulator ' which is gradually being constructed on the board, the children can now sing from the horizontal Sol-fa notation, and from the staff notation. The first of these is invaluable in the early stages, as it absolutely precludes guessing. In singing from the

modulator this is possible to a certain extent, as the relation of each note to the key-note is shown roughly in *distance* by the dots between the notes. There is no such help given in the horizontal notation.

In beginning the work in staff notation the notes of the scale will be thought of as steps in a ladder. In all keys, when *doh* is on a line, *me* and *soh* are also on lines, and high *doh* is on a space; but when *doh* is on a space, *me* and *soh* are on spaces, and high *doh* is on a line. These are very simple matters, but children are simple people, and will not despise such hints.

The next notes of the scale to be taken are *ray* and *te*, then *fah* and *lah*. The last two are the most difficult. A good pattern to fix in the children's minds is :

d f m l s t_1 *d*—

which splits up into :

d f m— ; *d l s*—

If these are really known, no trouble will be found with the notes *f* and *l*.

Plenty of exercises should be given in which the notes of the scale are taken in relation to the high *doh*. Possible notes should also be taken above high *doh* (such as high *ray*, high *me*, high *fah* in the scale of C) and below *doh*. With regard to the latter, the key may be changed from time to time when taking Sol-fa work from hand signs or the modulator, or from Sol-fa notation, in order to get a wider range for the notes above mentioned. Thus,

if the class be given the *doh* of G major, they can sing low *te*, low *lah*, low *soh*, and low *fah*, or, as these notes are written in Sol-fa notation, t_1 l_1 s_1 f_1. These points are sometimes overlooked by mistresses, and the early training loses in thoroughness.

Directly the children are sure of the diatonic notes of the key of C major they should take the sharpened fourth (*fe*), the flattened seventh (*taw*), and the sharpened fifth (*se*). Later on they will learn that these notes often introduce modulations to the dominant, subdominant, and relative minor keys respectively.

Extemporizing with the voice may now begin, along the lines suggested in Chapter IX. An extra interest will thus be added to the lesson, and the child will have its first initiation into 'self-expression' through the art of music.

CHAPTER VI

THE TEACHING OF SIGHT-SINGING

INSTRUCTION in sight-singing should begin by teaching the staff notation through the Tonic Sol-fa method. Objections to this are sometimes raised by very musical people, who have no recollection of any 'method' by means of which they themselves learnt to sing at sight, and who therefore think their pupils can pick up the knowledge in the same instinctive fashion. Experience proves that this is very rarely the case.

With very little children it is well to keep entirely to hand signs and ear tests until all the notes of the scale are known, through their 'mental effect'. One reason for this is that such children cannot read or write, so no musical work can be done with them which implies this knowledge. Care must be taken to vary the lessons as much as possible.

At one lesson the teacher can give the hand signs and ear tests herself. At the next, one of the class can give the hand signs for the rest of the class, and the teacher the ear tests. At the next, a child can give the ear tests, and so on. An experienced teacher will find plenty of similar ways for producing new interest in the lessons, even though the actual amount of work done be necessarily small.

Nothing is gained by hurrying over the initial stages of ear-training. The foundation must be

securely laid, or trouble will come later. Those who have had experience of class work in kindergartens know the special difficulties to be met—the irregularity of attendance, the constant stream of new pupils coming in, and so on. Unless plenty of opportunity is given for revision the work will suffer in thoroughness.

For children who take this work between the ages of eight and twelve, no better scheme for sight-singing can be found than that contained in Somervell's *Fifty Steps in Sight-singing*, supplemented by the children's books, *A Thousand Exercises*, published by Curwen. It is essential to read carefully the appendices to this work, especially that concerned with the minor keys. Another book of sight-singing exercises which follows the same sequence is the *Rational Sight Reader*, by Everett, published by Boosey.

In teaching the keys of G major and F major it is most important that the class shall themselves discover the necessity for the F♯ and B♭ in the respective signatures. Inexperienced teachers sometimes teach this as a dogma, and thereby deprive the children of the delight of discovering it for themselves.

Thus, if the scale of G major be played with F♮ instead of F♯, the class will discover that *taw* has been played instead of *te*, and will soon find out how to correct the wrong sound.

Similarly, if the scale of F major be played with B♮ instead of B♭, they will say that *fe* has been played instead of *fah*.

If the order of keys taken be that of the *Fifty Steps*, the following diagram will show at a glance the underlying plan :

7 5 3 1 2 4 6
E♭ | B♭ | F || C || G | D | A

It should be noted that so far as the positions of the notes on the stave are concerned, the key of A♭ is as easy to sing in as the key of A, D♭ as D, and so on. This fact is sometimes overlooked, and unnecessary difficulties are created for the children.

It is important for a class to sing at sight fluently in one key before attempting a new one. Some teachers take keys in groups, and try to teach them all together. This plan rarely leads to satisfactory results.

Minor Keys.

It is wise to defer the treatment of these until all the major keys have been mastered. The harmonic form of the scale of C minor should then be taken, the children identifying the two notes new to them as the flattened third and sixth of the scale. It is a good plan to get them to sing a few melodies from the blackboard which are in C minor, but which bear the signature of C major, the flattened third and sixth being supplied. This impresses the new notes on the children.

Later on, the correct signature should be evolved by experiment, and the same plan followed for the other keys, before the ' rule ' for finding the signature is discussed. The melodic form of the scale can then be taught, and both forms practised to give

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plenty of freedom in the new tonality. The various minor keys should then be taken in the same order as that in which the major keys were taken.

It is advisable to limit the work at first to melodies which do not modulate to the relative major. Later on, when the children are fairly fluent, they can take these. At first they will have to make use of ' bridge-notes ' at the modulation, but, with a little practice, they will soon be able to sing at sight to *lah*.

Part-singing.

Children should not be allowed to sing part-songs until they can sing at sight in parts. The reason for this is that in the majority of part-songs the under parts are written too low for the child voice, and if they are *practised* several times in succession, harm is likely to result. If, on the other hand, the songs can be read at sight, the parts can be interchanged, and the voices of the children do not suffer to the same extent. The greatest difficulty in teaching part-singing is a moral one : a child who takes an under part does not like the feeling of some one singing above her. The voices must be divided carefully for this work—some teachers prefer to get the balance on the side of the under parts, in order to avoid the feeling that it is necessary to shout in order to be heard ! The ideal plan is to interchange the parts freely at the same lesson.

Exercises should be chosen at first in which the under part starts on a fairly high note and, if possible, before the upper part enters, in order to give confidence. The under part should also move freely,

and should not consist of long holding notes. Exercises in which the parts cross afford excellent practice. Good instances of easy exercises are to be found in Nos. 9, 68, 80, 101, &c. in Book III of *A Thousand Exercises*; also in the many canons to be found in that book.

Sight-singing in three parts should always begin with exercises written in the contrapuntal style. There are instances of these in *Three-part Vocal Exercises*, by Raymond, published by Weekes & Sons. This book is also suitable for use where men's voices are obtainable, the two treble parts being taken by two tenors, and the transposed alto part by a bass.

A good series of part-songs is to be found in the Year Book Press, which only admits songs by standard composers.

CHAPTER VII

THE TEACHING OF TIME AND RHYTHM

It is impossible to over-estimate the importance of careful study before a teacher attempts to train children in a sense of time and rhythm.

Not only must an intellectual conception of the importance of the subject be arrived at, but a sub-conscious realization of it. The function of rhythm in the world should be perceived, and such natural phenomena as day and night, the seasons, the tides, and countless others, seem to be examples of the same principle. The same influence may be traced in social activities. Work cannot be organized and carried on where rhythmic order is not found, and no conception of the brain or of the artistic faculty can emerge uninformed by rhythmic continuity.

A human being imperfectly endowed with a sense of balance or rhythm is a danger to the community, and one who is entirely without this sense is spoken of as ' insane '.

In the training of the teacher it is well to call attention first to the rhythm of speech, before entering into that of music. Those who have had a literary education have already studied the metrical properties of poetry and prose. They will readily agree that such phrases as :

' My father's father saw it not.'
' Happy New Year to you.'

'Because I sought it far from men,
In deserts and alone.'
'We must go back with Policeman Day,
Back to the City of Sleep.'

can be thought of as written in $\frac{2}{4}$, $\frac{3}{4}$, $\frac{4}{4}$, $\frac{6}{8}$ times respectively.

M. Jaques Dalcroze has shown, through his Rhythmic Gymnastics, the extraordinary effect that rhythmic movements can have, not only on physical health, but on mental and moral poise. For highly nervous children some such work is of especial benefit, but for all children it is of great value. It should be supplemented in the ear-training class by constant practice in beating time to tunes. The teacher begins by playing simple tunes, with strongly marked accents. The children should discover these accents for themselves, and should be taught to beat time, using the proper conductor's beats from the first.

The French time names—*ta*, *ta-té*, &c.—are invaluable in early stages. They are based on sense impression, and are picked up quickly by the children. By taking the crotchet as the unit to start with, the old-fashioned plan of exalting the semibreve, the least used note in music, to a primary place, is avoided.

If the order given in Somervell's *Fifty Steps in Sight-singing* be followed, the question of complicated time will not be forced too early on the attention of the children. Pupils trained on other systems have sometimes been found incapable of singing melodies written in complicated time, even though they can beat time to the notes, giving the time

names, without mistake. The same thing is noticeable in their instrumental work. This is due to the fact that one side of their training has been developed at the expense of the other—time at the expense of pitch. There seems little point in teaching a child such time-values as

when it can only read at sight in the key of C major !

In taking an exercise in sight-singing for the first time with a class at an elementary stage the following practice has been found beneficial :

1. The children sing the tune straight through at sight, without stopping, the teacher beating time. Mistakes are then pointed out and difficult phrases practised.

2. The children stand and sing the tune straight through again, beating time as they do so.

3. Individual children then stand and sing the tune by themselves, beating time. In this way the child gets to know the sound of its own voice, and the teacher can correct any individual faults of intonation, voice production, &c. Some children will always have an inclination to shout when they sing with others, partly through excitement and partly because they cannot hear their own voices in any other way. If this be permitted the quality of tone will rapidly degenerate, and the effect of the whole class work will suffer.

Nothing is more delightful than to hear young children sing quietly, and without in any way forcing their voices.

CHAPTER VIII

THE TEACHING OF DICTATION

So long as the work done in ear-training is in the very elementary stages the best form of dictation will be :

1. Ear tests, consisting of two to three notes at a time, which should be written in staff notation as soon as possible.

2. Monotone time tests, which should be quite short, as the constant repetition of the same note in pitch is irritating to the more sensitive ears in a class. This point is sometimes overlooked, with the result that only the less musical children get any real benefit from the tests.

By the time that children can sing at sight in the key of D major they will be ready to take down from dictation short melodic phrases in time and tune. A useful plan is for the phrase to be played over three times, the children listening carefully and beating time. They should then sing the phrase once through to *lah*, and write it down.

This method of dictation is more satisfactory than that of dictating a bar at a time, as it draws attention to musical phrases as a whole. Later on it will be found possible to dictate in the same way longer and longer phrases. Incidentally the memory is being trained as well as the ear.

The class should be accustomed to write phrases

which do not necessarily begin on the first beat of the bar. The handwriting, exact position of accidentals, &c., should be carefully watched. With young children it is well to use manuscript books which have the lines ruled very widely apart—a little child's hand soon gets cramped if it is made to write in an ordinary manuscript book.

When a class can take down simple melodies correctly it is time to begin two-part work. As a preliminary, get a child to play middle C on the piano, then to combine with it each of the notes of the scale of C major in turn. The class will decide which of these two-part chords are pleasant to listen to. Opinion is generally unanimous in favour of the third, sixth, and octave, which will therefore be the basis of the first exercises in two-part dictation.

Plenty of practice should be given in isolated examples of these chords, in more than one key, before the class attempts to combine time with tune. When they are ready for this, the work should begin with very simple phrases, with plenty of repetition to enable them to be quickly memorized. A later stage introduces the use of passing notes. It is better to play the exercise through first without these, and when it has been written and corrected, to play it again, inserting the passing notes.

Before a class has finished the major keys it should be ready for the dictation of three-part chords. As the children are accustomed to the sound of the chord of the third on all degrees of the scale, it will be a natural experiment to play a particular combination of thirds, thus arriving at the triad. After

this has been played on all degrees of the scale, the class should be asked to decide which of these chords it will be well to get to know first. They will remember that the first three keys in which they learnt to sing were C, G, and F major, and will therefore suggest that the tonic, dominant, and subdominant chords should be chosen.

At this stage it should be pointed out that all the notes of the scale are contained in one or other of these chords. This is a seed which, if well planted, will suggest the first principles of harmonizing melodies later.

We must now work at the three chords carefully. Begin by making the class sing them in arpeggio, and in a definite rhythm, so as to get precision. Each chord should be sung once very slowly, so as to get the notes correctly, and absolutely in tune; then twice more quickly, so as to get the feeling of harmony. This step is invaluable in its later results —a child will often be heard to sing different chords in arpeggio, when in doubt as to the chords to use in harmonizing a melody.

When the three primary chords are known the others may be added, together with the dominant seventh and the inversions, in all keys. This last step must not be hurried. The average class rarely finishes three-part chords in less than a year, and unless plenty of time is given difficulties will crop up later, when four-part chords are begun.

It is not enough for children to be trained to listen to the actual notes of a chord—they must feel the mental effect, in the same way in which

they felt these effects in the case of the notes of the scale.

A later step is to make use of the position of the chord in a sequence—for instance, the child soon gets to notice that many phrases end with the progression subdominant, dominant, tonic.

We now come to the consideration of the dictation of four-part chords. These need not be sung in arpeggio. As a first experiment it will be necessary to play the chord to the class with each note doubled in turn, so that they may feel the necessity for doubling the best note.

This experiment is most valuable, as it gets the child away from the cramping feeling of keeping a rule merely because it is mentioned in a text-book.

Plenty of phrases with the primary chords in root position must be taken before the other chords are treated. For at least a year the class will not be able to *write* four-part dictation; the time should be spent in identifying the chords when played.

The chant form is the best for elementary work. It is very simple, and can be adapted to every sort of sequence. Passing notes, appoggiaturas, suspensions, &c., should be avoided at first. When the diatonic chords and their inversions are known the principal modulations should be studied. It will probably be necessary for the teacher to write her own tests, as there are very few books of chants published which contain enough exercises on the use of the easier chords.

The last step in the teaching of dictation is the treatment of what may be called the 'mixed phrase',

i.e. one in the course of which the number of parts varies. This is the most difficult stage of all, and will need the utmost patience on the part of the teacher. But by this time the children will have begun some of the practical work at the piano described in the chapter on 'The Teaching of Extemporization and Harmony', and this will help them to recognize easily the drift of the mixed phrase.

CHAPTER IX

THE TEACHING OF EXTEMPORIZATION AND HARMONY

In early days the art of melody was developed before that of harmony. The same plan should be followed in the general musical education of the child.

As every child possesses a voice, but does not in every case learn an instrument, it is clear that the fundamental training in music must be given through the use of the voice. The first step will consist in learning how to sing at sight and how to take down easy melodies from dictation. Parallel with this work the child should be taught to extemporize melodies, and to sing them.

Quite little children will take pleasure in completing a musical phrase of which the first few bars have been given them. The procedure will be as follows :

1. The teacher writes two bars in C major, $\frac{2}{4}$ time, on the blackboard.

2. The class sings it through twice, first using the Sol-fa names for the notes, then singing to *lah*.

3. Volunteers are then asked for to complete the phrase by adding another two bars. The more musical children in the class will at once respond, and their efforts will stir the ambition of the others. It will soon be a question of taking the children in turn, a few at each lesson—so eager will they be to 'express themselves' in melody.

It is important not to be too critical of these early efforts. The great thing is to get the children un-self-conscious—variety of melodic outline and of rhythm will follow quickly enough.

The next step will be for two children in the class to extemporize the whole phrase between them, one taking the first two bars and the other the last two. The key and time should be varied as much as possible—keys a fourth or fifth apart should be used in succession, or the children will assume that any melody can be sung by them in any key, which is obviously not the case. A melody sung in C major, which uses middle C and high F, cannot be sung in the key of G major with the child voice.

The class will now find it quite easy to extemporize the whole of a four-bar phrase. Suggestions can be made by the teacher, such as :

' Begin on the third beat of the bar.'

' Introduce two triplets in the course of the phrase,' and so on.

When this becomes easy to them they will be ready to begin eight-bar melodies. At first the teacher will give the first four bars, and different members of the class will finish the tune. Modulations should now be introduced. The same procedure as before should be followed, until any child in the class can give the whole of a tune, in any given key and time, and with a given modulation.

Next comes the sixteen-bar tune, in which at least one modulation should be introduced. A good plan is to begin with the well-known simple form :

1. Four bars to the $\frac{6}{4}\ \frac{5}{3}$ cadence.

2. Four bars to the principal modulation.
3. Repeat the first four bars.
4. Four bars to the end.

Three children can be used for this, in the following way :

The first child sings the first four bars, the second goes on to the end of the eighth bar, then the first child repeats what she sang, and a third child finishes. This affords excellent practice, particularly for the first child, who soon learns to confine herself to a simple opening, as this must be remembered and repeated later.

Memory plays a much larger part in the power to extemporize than many people realize, and if this step in the preliminary work be conscientiously taken there will be abundant results later.

We now come to the important stage of extemporizing on the piano. It must be remembered that a very thorough foundation of the knowledge of chords has been laid by the ear-training work, leading up to the power to write down chords from dictation, and to sing them in arpeggio.

The first exercise will consist in playing a very simple tonic and dominant accompaniment on the piano, while a melody is extemporized with the voice. There is far more variety possible in this than appears at first sight. For instance, the sequence of the chords may run in any of the following ways, among others :

I V I V I I V I
I I V I I I V I
I I I V I I V I
I V V I I I V I

Those who have studied elementary algebra will recognize a simple application of the theory of permutations !

It is interesting to note the ease with which children will do this exercise, if they have been carefully trained in all the preceding work. Grown-up students are usually very much slower than children at it, partly because they are inclined to be self-conscious, and to worry about the sound of their voice, &c. But the child who has been accustomed to sing at sight and to extemporize with the voice in front of a class is not in the least embarrassed at being told to go to the piano and combine a sung melody with a simple piano accompaniment. At first there will be a tendency to restrict the melodies to the actual notes of the tonic and dominant chords, but with a little practice passing notes, &c. are soon added, and graceful little tunes will result.

The next exercise consists in the use of three chords, tonic, dominant, and subdominant; the melody, as before, being sung. At this stage it is wise to let the dictation work in the class take the form of phrases which can be harmonized with these chords, so as to accustom the children to use them. This gives invaluable practice in the first principles of harmonizing melodies, and should precede all formal treatment of the subject.

Another useful exercise at this stage is to let the children add a second part, either above or below a given melodic phrase. This will be the foundation of later work in formal counterpoint.

The class is now ready for the treatment of modulations on the piano. If the preliminary work in cadences, dominant sevenths, &c. has been conscientiously done in all keys there will be no difficulty in extemporizing a sung melody, which modulates, and adding a simple accompaniment at the piano.

Other chords can now be added, and the children will be ready to extemporize short tunes, entirely at the piano, without the aid of the voice. To some people this may seem an easier thing to do than to accompany the voice, but experience has proved the contrary. The child is so accustomed to use the voice that it will at first be inclined to think of all melody as vocal, and will be a little troubled when told not to think about vocal pitch.

The discipline of these early restrictions is obvious, and cannot be over-estimated. It quite does away with the 'hymn-tune' style of early composition, which is such a trap to many amateurs.

Side by side with this work it is advisable to get the class to extemporize chants, under the same restrictions as have been put on the melodies, i.e. they will begin by using only tonic and dominant chords, then adding the subdominant, and so on. The double chant will give opportunities for more than one modulation being introduced at a time. This work will prepare the way for figured basses, and more formal harmony. The children will learn to avoid consecutive fifths and eighths because they gradually notice the ugliness of them, which seems a better plan than to learn to avoid them as a 'rule'.

There is an interesting reference to methods of teaching harmony in the Board of Education Memorandum on Music, issued in 1914.

The writer says :

'It cannot be emphasized too strongly that the current method of teaching harmony, whereby pupils are taught to resolve chords on paper by eye, quite regardless of the fact that 99 per cent. of them do not realize the sound of the chords they are writing, is musically valueless.

. . . . .

'In no other language than that of music would it be tolerated that the theoretical rules of grammar and syntax should be so completely separated from the actual literature from which they are derived, that the pupil should never have perceived that there was any relation whatever between them.

. . . . .

'Another very common result of the neglect of an aural basis for harmony teaching is that students who can pass a difficult examination, and write correctly by eye an advanced harmony exercise, are often quite unable to recognize that exercise played over to them on the piano, or even to write down the notes, apart from the time, of a hymn or a tune that they have known all their lives.'

The whole chapter in this memorandum is well worth reading.

The final stages in the teaching of extemporization will consist in :

1. Expressing a given idea in musical form, e. g. a march, or a gavotte.

2. Extemporizing on a given theme.

Although these last stages may be thought to be beyond the power of the average child, experience has proved that it is not so, provided the previous work has been carefully graded, and that none of the early steps have been omitted or hurried over.

CHAPTER X

THE TEACHING OF ELEMENTARY COMPOSITION

A WISE musician has drawn attention to the fact that music has a more important educational function than any foreign language, being a common language for the expression of emotion, imaginative power, and rhythmic feeling. He went on to say that, as a training, it is of use from the very earliest years, and for all classes of the community.

If we agree with this view—and it is encouraging to note the increasing number of those who do so—we must so organize the musical education of children that a time comes when they will be ready to 'express themselves' in music in the same way in which they can express themselves in their native tongue.

An earlier chapter in this book has dealt with the teaching of extemporizing, first treated as vocal expression, then as instrumental. When a class of children has arrived at the stage of being able to extemporize a tune of sixteen bars, in any given key and time, and introducing given modulations, it is quite ready to begin the more formal study of composition, and to be initiated into the mysteries of form. Hitherto the experiments of the class in this direction have been chiefly spontaneous; the teacher has of set design left the child who is extemporizing

as free as possible, but the time has now come for a new 'window' to be opened in its mind.

A preliminary talk should be given on the need of form in music. It must be pointed out that we cannot be intelligible without it, that it is not enough to have a language at our command; we must have *shape* in order to convey our ideas to others. The child should realize that the great artists in all the arts are under the same necessity as the youngest beginner in composition. Inspiration must be embodied in a definite form, or others cannot share the vision of beauty.

For a time the child now has to learn to select a musical form, then to choose a musical thought which can be fitly expressed in it. It will seem a cramping process after the freedom of extemporizing, but the child who loves the work will willingly submit to the discipline. It cannot be too often impressed on the young teacher that children as a whole *like* discipline. They despise those who are indifferent to it, and give a ready submission to those who expect it, provided they feel sure of an underlying sympathy.

The first lessons in form should consist of the analysis of simple tunes, preferably of the Folk Song type. The forms known as AB, ABA, and the variants derived from these will be explained, and the class will write examples of each, at first not harmonizing the melodies, but afterwards doing so. The old dance forms will then be taken. At this stage it is absolutely necessary for those of the class who are musical, and who wish to give a little extra

time to music, to go through a course of strict harmony and counterpoint ; endless time will be wasted if they do not do so. The work will be very much lightened because of the foundation already laid, for, without knowing it, the children have been doing a little free counterpoint for some time, when they added vocal parts to a given melody, and their knowledge of practical harmony will make it possible for them to take many a short cut in the formal work.

The dance forms, together with very simple fugues and contrapuntal studies, and a few 'free' exercises in songs and short pieces, will be as far as the majority of children will get in the study of composition. But there will always be a few in each class who will be eager and able to go farther, and to begin the study of sonata form. For such children, and certainly for all teachers of music, there can be no better text-book than Hadow's *Sonata Form*, published in the Novello Primer Series. This book is often described as ' more exciting than a novel ' ! Somervell's Charts for Harmony and Counterpoint are also most valuable, and will save the necessity of a text-book in these subjects—at any rate for the beginner, who works under guidance.

There is one curious fact about all but the most musical children when they begin to *write down* tunes of their own composition. They make mistakes which they have never made when *extemporizing* the same type of tune. This seems to arise from the fact that they suddenly feel self-conscious —they have more time to think when writing than

when singing or playing, and are inclined to compose one bar at a time instead of phrase by phrase. They will produce a tune of seven bars—they will end on a weak beat—they will come to a full stop in the middle of an eight-bar tune on the tonic chord, root at the top—the last half of the tune will have nothing to do with the first half. We could write a page of their possible mistakes !

The cure for these lapses is to insist on the tunes being sung before being written. The old unconscious habit will then assert itself, and the little tunes will fall into shape.

It is a useful lesson to get a class to criticize all original tunes when played by the young composer. For one thing, the criticism of our contemporaries often carries more weight than that of our elders ; and for another, the practice arouses the critical faculty, and teaches the children to listen keenly, for they have not the written tune in front of them.

After a little practice quite good criticisms will be given by children. They will notice such points as a weak scheme of keys—undue repetition of the chief melody—a clumsy modulation—a trite ending —an over-laboured sequence—a tendency to borrow ideas from others, and so on.

This training will be of the greatest possible value to them later on in the concert-room. As a writer in *The Times* once put it :

' The vague impressions which are all that many people carry away from the concert-room would be replaced by definite experiences.

. . . . .

'Mental analysis is not, of course, the main object in listening to music, but it is a most powerful aid to full appreciation. It is the failure to perceive any definite relation between the parts and the whole that baffles so many people, and sends them away from the concert-room remarking that they cannot understand "classical" music.'

CHAPTER XI

THE TEACHING OF TRANSPOSITION

A GREAT many musical people will not take up the subject of transposition seriously, because they have no idea of the lines along which to work. They all agree that the knowledge would be most useful to them, especially from the point of view of song accompaniment, but the path seems to be beset by so many difficulties, and the results of their first attempts are so pitifully small, that they generally give up all hope, and all effort. Then again, some of the books published on the subject are not very helpful to the average student. Some of them seem to start with the assumption that the student is very musical, and can do a great deal by instinct. They therefore give only the roughest directions. Others begin sensibly enough, but leave out so many steps in the work that a student may be forgiven for throwing them aside in despair.

Now there are three chief reasons why the musician would do well to study transposition :

1. For the purpose of song accompaniment.

2. As an aid to committing music to memory, especially that written in a form where different keys are used for the presentment of the same material.

3. As an infallible test of a sound 'general' musical education.

The last reason is not often advocated, but a little thought will show that it is impossible for the average student, not specially gifted in any way, to transpose even an easy piece of music at sight on the piano, without proving the possession of a trained ear and a knowledge of practical harmony. For class work with children it can be made a still more valuable test of progress. For the average child will be quite unable to transpose a simple ear test—such as *d f m l s* t_1 *d*—on the piano, from one key to another, say a fifth away, without a good deal of accurate knowledge.

The first exercises in transposition will be very simple—any child of seven or eight years old, who can sing at sight, and take down ear tests, in the keys of C and G major, can be expected to do them. They consist in :

1. Singing any well-known hymn-tune, or simple melody of the Folk Song type, using the Sol-fa names of the notes. It should be sung phrase by phrase, until every child in the class is sure of the correct notes.

2. The children should now go in turn to the piano, and each play a phrase of the melody, first in C major, then in G.

It is important to emphasize the fact that the tune must be well known to them, or an extra difficulty will be introduced.

As the children learn more and more keys, these tunes should be transposed into them.

Provided the class does not consist of picked musical children, there will always be a few in it

who do not learn the piano. This work will be one of their opportunities for learning a little about it. Interesting results have been obtained from such children, if the teacher is enthusiastic and ready to help.

By the time that the class has begun the study of three-part chords the transposition will become more and more interesting, as sequences of chords can now be transposed. When the first steps in extemporizing on the piano are begun, the transposition advances by leaps and bounds. The children will be delighted to play their little tonic and dominant accompaniments in every key—to change from major to tonic minor by flattening the third and sometimes the sixth of the scale.

There is a sense of freedom and power in such work, to which the class will readily respond. They soon realize that certain melodies 'only sound nice' in such and such a key, and in this way the foundation of a 'colour sense' will be laid. Also, apart from the question of the key in which a melody sounds best to a child, another point comes into notice. The child cannot sing certain notes in certain melodies unless it keeps within a certain range of keys. This teaches them something. The point has been referred to in the preceding chapter.

Altogether it will be seen that the study of transposition is opening a new window for them into the fairyland of music.

Later on, when a child can compose short harmonized tunes of its own, it is well to hold up the ideal of being able to transpose them into any

key, and in certain cases, where the melody lends itself to the treatment, from major to minor, and vice versa. This work must of course be voluntary, but a child is well rewarded when it finds that it is only the first step which costs, and that the second of such tunes is so much easier to transpose than the first !

And the time comes when a child will sit down to the piano, and will extemporize quite happily either in F major or in F♯ major, whichever is suggested. Such work is well worth any initial trouble taken—it is a combined process of ear and mind which has a far-reaching educational effect.

The last stage of all in this work consists in transposing at sight from the printed page. Hitherto the ear and the mind have been chiefly employed, but now the *eye* must be trained to do its share.

It is found useful to make children say the names of the chords aloud when they are beginning this sort of transposition. The habit sets up a connecting link between the various faculties in use, in some curious way. The eye can help by noting the intervals between successive notes in the various parts, and especially in the outer parts. It sees the general drift of the piece before the mind comes into play—the coming modulations and so on. In fact, it is not too much to say that it is best, in certain musical phrases, to rely on the eye alone, e.g. rapid decorative passages, which are not always easy to analyse at first sight.

A word of warning must now be given. Those who attempt 'short cuts' in this work will certainly

come to grief, unless they are born with the faculty —undoubtedly possessed by a few—of being able to transpose by a sort of instinct. Such people are fortunate, but it is not our present task to attempt to guide them. We are concerned with the average child, taught in fairly large classes, in the ordinary school curriculum, and with only a very limited amount of time at our disposal.

CHAPTER XII

GENERAL HINTS ON TAKING A LESSON IN EAR-TRAINING

ALL those who teach ear-training should keep a book in which they write on one side of the page the proposed scheme of work for each lesson, and on the other the actual work done. All sorts of things may happen in the course of the lesson to upset the proposed scheme. The children may find the new work easier, or more difficult than was expected, a question from a child may suddenly reveal a piece of ignorance which necessitates a digression—every teacher is aware of the 'unknown quantities' in class work. Unless the proposed scheme of work is checked by what is done in each lesson, there will be difficulties later.

Again, each lesson must form a definite link between past and future lessons. It is often a temptation to a teacher of initiative to draw attention to a new aspect of the subject, in which she happens to be specially interested at the time, when the previous work is not in a fit state to be left, even for two or three lessons. Something happens to make her realize this, and the new piece of work is hurriedly left—suspended in mid-air, as it were—and is not referred to again until an accident recalls it to her mind. Such teaching certainly has the charm of novelty to a class, but we must remember

that one of the faults of childhood is an undue readiness to pass on quickly to learn 'something new' before the previous work is secure.

In taking a lesson the teacher should aim at speaking in her ordinary voice. Inexperienced people sometimes imagine that it is necessary to shout when speaking in a fairly large room. But provided the voice is clear, and the articulation good, a low voice carries just as well as a loud one, and certainly produces a greater sense of repose.

Another fault to avoid is monotony of tone—we need 'modulations' in speaking just as much as in music, and a class is keenly, though often unconsciously, susceptible to this. A change of position is helpful. The voice of the mistress will brighten at once if she comes down from the platform and walks about a little. But she must never turn her back on a class when actually telling them something. Musical people, who have not the same experience in such matters as the ordinary teacher, constantly do this, and will even hide the greater part of a blackboard when pointing to notes of a tune.

In beginning a lesson the maximum effort will be gained if communal work be taken before individual, i. e. sight-singing before dictation, extemporizing, &c. The reason for this is obvious, a certain momentum is thus generated, which is impossible later, when the force has been diffused.

Before a tune is sung at sight the class should analyse it, giving the key, time signature, starting note, modulations, sequences, general construction, &c. Remind the children from time to time that

the last sharp in a signature gives the *te* in a key, the last flat the *fah*; that when modulating to the dominant key the *fe* of the first key becomes the *te* of the second, in going from a key to its subdominant *taw* becomes *fah*, for the relative minor *se* becomes *te*, and for the relative major *taw* becomes *soh*. Also that if in a minor key *taw* occurs in an ascending scale passage, or is taken or left by leap, it is a sign of a modulation to the relative major.

In starting the tune the tonic chord is played, and the teacher beats a whole bar, together with a fraction of the next if the tune begins on an off-beat, before the class takes it up.

Do not *tap* time when beating: it cultivates a habit of inattention on the part of a class. Nor should the teacher beat time when the class is doing so, unless for a moment, to correct an error. One reason for this is that if the time signature be anything but $\frac{2}{4}$ or $\frac{6}{8}$, the teacher's arm moves in a different direction in certain beats from that of the class facing her, and this is most confusing.

Never correct a mistake by singing the right note yourself. This would be teaching by imitation —as we teach a bird to sing a tune—not teaching by method.

Remember that we are not aiming at artistic performance in a sight-singing class, so do not hammer away at a tune until the performance of it has reached your ideal. If you do, your aim is 'performance'—not sight-singing.

If a child makes a mistake in dictation, do not

tell it what is wrong, unless you are very short of time. Get it to sing the phrase it has written to Sol-fa names—in this way it will find out its own mistake.

In writing notes, either on the blackboard or on manuscript paper, it is not necessary to fill up all the space between the lines, as is done in printed music. If children are allowed to do this, they will spend a long time over their exercises. Teach them to turn all tails of notes *up* which are written on lines or spaces below the third line, and *down* for those above. The direction of the tails of notes on the third line itself will depend on the context. These directions refer, of course, to the writing of melodies. It is often necessary to remind even grown-up students that accidentals must be placed *before* the note affected, not after it; also that a dot after a note which is written on a line must come on the space next above, not on the line itself. Children often forget that the leading note in a minor key invariably carries an accidental.

We must now say a little on the subject of revision. It is a fault of the young teacher that she often entirely neglects this, with the result that her class can only sing accurately at sight, and do dictation in, the last key learned. During the first few lessons in a new key it is certainly inadvisable to give exercises in the preceding ones, as the whole attention must be concentrated on the new tonality. But other keys should be taken at least once in three weeks. An impatient person may say: 'But properly taught children could not forget so soon!'

Yet, at times, we are all hazy on almost any subject, but it does not follow that we are either fools, or badly taught: we are simply human! After all, machines get out of order, so why not the most complicated machine of all—the human mind?

Again, it is only the inexperienced teacher who thinks her class has been badly taught by her predecessor. Many a student in training is inclined, after the first lesson with a new class, to come to the distracting conclusion that the children know 'nothing'. This generally means that, after the holidays, the former work needs a little revision before new work is begun.

In taking a fairly advanced class a teacher is often worried because there is not enough time in a single forty-minute lesson a week to touch on all of such subjects as chords, cadences, extemporizing, transposition, &c., in addition to sight-singing and dictation. It is certainly quite impossible to do so, and this is one of the reasons for apparently slow progress. But there is, however, a good side to the difficulty, for such work ought not to be hurried, and it is well to leave a little breathing space between the references to it.

Teachers are sometimes heard to speak with regret of the high spirits of their classes, which lead to restlessness. But we should never regret *force* in a child, and we must realize that all pent-up force needs a safety-valve. It must be our business to direct such force into safe channels. Keep the children really busy, give them plenty to do, and there will be no cause to regret their vitality.

CHAPTER XIII

THE TEACHING OF THE PIANO

It is impossible, within the limits of a chapter, to do more than dwell on a few practical points connected with the teaching and organization of this work in a school. As was said in the preceding chapter, the ideal for all young children who are about to learn the piano is that they should first go through a short course of ear-training. If this be done, the progress in the first year's work will be about three times what it would otherwise be. If the ear-training be done along the lines suggested in earlier chapters, the child will have been taught to sing easy melodies at sight, she will have approached the question of time by means of the French time names, she will have learned to beat time with the proper conductor's beat, to find notes on the piano, and, what is more important, to know these notes by sound, in relation to fixed notes.

In this way some of the processes which a child goes through in beginning to learn the piano are taken one at a time, in company with other children, and are therefore not hurried.

When the time has come to begin the piano, the child should join a *class* for this for one year. Such a class should not exceed six in number. During this time she will add to her knowledge the first principles of fingering, will play easy exercises for

fingers, wrist, &c., and will learn a few easy pieces and duets.

From the very first she will be taught to analyse a piece before she begins to play it—she will find out the key, time, cadences, sequences, passages of imitation, modulations, &c. If the melody be within the range of the child's voice she will then sing it, beating time as she does so. After these preliminaries it is only a question of technique to learn to play it. The last stage will consist in learning the piece by heart. The day has long gone by when it was considered a sign of exceptional musical gift to be able to do this. All experienced teachers know that, provided a child is having its ear trained by some such method as that suggested above, it can learn a piece of music by heart almost entirely away from the piano. That is to say, instead of the wearisome repetitions which were formerly necessary before a piece could be played by heart, it is possible, directly the technique is mastered, and in many cases before this is done, to learn the piece away from the piano. The benefit of this is obvious, and the nerves, both of the player and of the unwilling listeners, are the gainers.

A little thought will show that it should be no more difficult for average children to learn a piece of music by heart in this way, than for them to learn a piece of prose or poetry by heart. The initial steps are exactly the same—the language has to be known, and it is then a question of memory, and memory alone. Who would think of learning poetry by heart by the process of repeating it aloud

a hundred or more times? Yet this is what was formerly done in the case of music.

Sixty years ago no girl was considered educated who could not play the piano a little. Since then a reaction has begun to set in. The standard of playing has gone up to such a degree that parents are often heard to say that their child is not musical enough for it to be worth while to teach it an instrument. This is a pity. Music is used so much in our daily life that we cannot do without our 'average performers'. The soldier marches best to a tune, the sailor heaves his anchor to a song, the ritual of all forms of religion needs the aid of music; we need it, not only in the pageantry of our processions, but in the solemn crises of life and death. For these purposes artists of the first rank are not necessary.

Every child, however apparently unmusical, should be given its chance, at any rate up to the age of twelve years. During this time, the stress should be placed, for the unmusical child, not so much on perfection of technique, but on the ability of playing easy pieces really well, and to read at sight such things as duets, song accompaniments, &c.

If, in addition, the children have joined an ear-training class, they will, at any rate, be intelligent listeners for the rest of their lives to other people's playing.

For all children, sight reading should form part, not only of every lesson, but of every day's practice. Many books for sight reading have been published, well graded, some of them beginning with little

pieces in the treble clef only, and going on to advanced tests. The following are a few, selected from many other excellent ones :

Schäfer (3 vols., published by Augener).

Hilliard (5 vols., published by Weekes).

Somervell (2 vols., published by Augener and Weekes respectively).

Taylor (1 vol., published by Bosworth).

As a child will need more than one such book in the course of her study, and as she cannot play the same test twice, a plan has been made in some schools for the music to be sold second-hand from one pupil to another, through the medium of a mistress, in the same way in which ordinary school books are sometimes passed on. This reduces the expense of constantly having to buy new books for sight reading. Another plan is to establish a lending library, each child to pay 2*d.* or 3*d.* a term.

In the teaching of 'pieces' music mistresses should bear in mind that children must, from time to time, revise those which they have finished. Nothing is more irritating to a parent than to be told by a child that it has 'nothing to play' to a visitor. The mistress who is anxious to get a pupil on as quickly as possible often overlooks this point, and an entirely wrong impression is given of the child's progress to the parent.

We now come to the vexed question of the interpretation of music by children. An interesting point can be noted about the practice of the early classical composers. They were accustomed to

give the minimum amount of indication as to tempo and general detail for the performance of their works.

And to what conclusion does this lead us ? Surely this—that these giants in music recognized the necessity for every performer of their works to express *themselves* through the music, subject to the broad conditions laid down by the composer. As Hegel said : ' Music is the most subjective of all arts.' And is it not true that it is this constant necessity for personal interpretation, so strongly felt by the majority of artists, which gives the permanent interest to music ?

We say, ' by the majority of artists ', for now and then we meet an artist who seems to have strayed from the path of beauty, and who is devoting his energies to an ascetic determination to keep alive one particular interpretation of a composer's work, or works ; who dictates these interpretations to his pupils, and who talks of other artists who feel the bounden duty of self-expression through the said works as ' outsiders ', and ' not in the cult '. Such musicians do not appear to see that such an attitude is ' idolatry ' pure and simple. They have not pondered the well-known anecdote of Brahms, who, when asked by a singer whether his interpretation of one of his songs was ' the right one ', answered : ' It is one of the many hundred possible interpretations.'

A word must now be said on the organization of instrumental work in the school. It is important that this should be in the hands of one person, who

will not only keep a supervising eye on questions of method, choice of music, lengths of lessons and practising, &c., but who will evolve some means of testing the progress of the pupils every term, in the same way in which their progress is tested in other subjects. The progress of the individual pupil should not be a secret between herself and her particular mistress!

It is a good plan to arrange a short recital every term in a school, at which from twenty to twenty-five pupils should play at a time. Such recitals should not exceed more than 1¼ hours in length. Nothing is more wearisome to the outsider than to listen to amateur performances which stretch out to two and sometimes to three hours' length. If the above plan be adopted, no child will be able to play more than one short piece. A mistress who is ambitious for the success of a few specially gifted pupils will sometimes suggest that a recital shall consist of the performance of two or three of these only, and that each pupil should play more than once.

Such suggestions should be frowned at.

What we want, if we have an educational end in view, is not so much to give the few musical children in a school the opportunity of gaining experience in playing in public, and indirectly of showing their progress to an admiring audience, but we want to give every music pupil in turn the same opportunity.

All children need experience before they can play to others in such a way that they not only

do themselves justice, but give pleasure to their listeners.

Pieces played at such recitals should invariably be by heart. The nervous pupil may possibly break down at her first appearance, but she will be quickly succeeded by a more confident player, the little victim of ' nerves ' will be soon forgotten, and the experience gained in this way is invaluable.

Before a recital a rehearsal should be held in the same room in which the recital is to take place. Few people seem to realize the immense difference made to children by a change of environment at such a time. The pupil who will play her piece on the piano without one mistake to her mistress, and in the room to which she is used, will often be troubled at playing it on another piano, and in another room.

A child was once known to break down in an evening recital, and when asked the reason, said : ' I have never played that piece before with a candle near me, and I didn't like the shadows on the piano.'

This sort of remark gives a real insight into the child mind.

Another small point may be mentioned. In the lessons just before a recital the mistress should go to the end of the room in which the lesson is given, while the child is playing her recital piece, in order that her supporting presence near the child may not be missed at the recital.

The recital will probably be followed by some form of reception by the school authorities of the parents of the pupils. No teacher should miss this

opportunity of getting to know the parents of her pupils. A friendly talk over the progress, or lack of progress of a child will often result in sympathetic help being given at home, and, in any case, the teacher will probably learn something about the character and home environment of the child which will help her in her work.

Partly owing to lack of time, and partly because some pieces will not be ready, a certain number of children will not be able to play at the school recital. Such children should be gathered together at the end of the term, and should play to the mistress who organizes the work. In this way they too will gain experience, and a little focus will have been made for their work.

We must add one final suggestion. Each music mistress should keep a register, in which she notes not only the names of her pupils, the times of their lessons, absences, late arrivals, &c., but an exact list of all the work done by them, with dates. This is invaluable, not only for gauging their progress, but as a means of quickly ascertaining their work in musical literature. It is, alas ! a day of examinations, and with the many little books of studies and pieces which have to be got up for outside examinations there is a serious fear of the systematic education of a child in classical musical literature being interrupted, or, at any rate, put on one side for a time. Such a book makes it possible for the mistress to keep a definite scheme of work in view for each pupil, and the busier the mistress, the more she will need some such aid to her memory.

The pupil should also keep a register, in which she notes the exact amount of time spent daily in practising, and the way in which she divides it. This book should be brought to each music lesson, and should also be shown to the supervising mistress at the end of each term.

CHAPTER XIV

SUGGESTIONS TO STUDENTS ON LEAVING A TRAINING DEPARTMENT

In finishing a course of training along the lines we have been considering, it is well to take a bird's-eye view of what has been done.

In all communal work the results fall roughly under two heads :

1. The getting of new ideas, and of new ways of presenting old ideas.

2. The development of character, due to the mixing with fellow students and with those who are directing the work.

So far as the actual work is concerned, stress has been laid on the following :

1. The necessity of considering music as a language

2. Various methods for teaching in accordance with this idea.

3. The principle of the inclusion of the work in the regular curriculum of schools, with class treatment.

In the short space of one year, which is all that can be generally spared by the student, it is impossible for her to realize the full bearing of all that has been done. It is only when we see such work in perspective, after the lapse of a little time, when it has been possible to work out at leisure some of the

practical points involved, that we can perceive all the ground covered.

Many students have experienced considerable difficulty at first in doing themselves what they have seen children do, who have been trained along these lines, i. e. to write down two-, three-, or four-part exercises in dictation, to transpose at sight, to extemporize without hesitation at the piano, &c. The feeling of working against time, of examinations to be passed, of discouragement at apparently slow progress, has possibly produced a state of mental indigestion, and the only cure for this is Time, the universal doctor.

The student is now at the point of entering a new sphere of work. The instrument has been sharpened. How is the application to be directed ? A word of warning is necessary. The young and enthusiastic teacher, fresh from the inspiration of a year's work with those interested in her development, is too often apt to be over-rigid in enforcing a new presentment of ideas.

' This way, or no way ! ' is her cry.

Now all sound educational work must possess an intrinsic quality of pliability : it must grow, expand, and be capable of development in a hundred ways. Small points of method must be adjusted to the particular class and pupil, and a generous recognition of the useful parts of other people's ' methods ' will be the surest way of obtaining recognition of our own ideals. Provided a firm attitude be maintained on essentials, it is often possible to compromise on minor details. Above all, an open mind must be

preserved in the presence of advice, however inexperienced. Many a young teacher has failed in her first post because she has given the impression to those in authority that there is one, and one only, way in which she can do her work—one, and one only, possible scheme of division of classes and hours for lessons.

An arrangement far short of the ideal must often be accepted, with a courteous protest, but it will assuredly be modified later by the authorities when the teacher has won confidence by arousing the interest and enthusiasm of the pupils, and by showing good results from the lessons.

Has not every new presentment of every subject in the school curriculum been greeted with the same chorus of depreciation at first ? Why should music, the latest arrived of the subjects on the regular curriculum, fare differently ?

Remember that the head of a school has often to keep in mind, not only his or her ideals in education, but the wishes of a governing body and of the parents.

A short demonstration of work done under imperfect conditions will often throw a flood of light on the aims of an enthusiastic teacher, who has been struggling in difficult surroundings. ' I had no idea you were doing all *this* with the children ' has been the admiring comment of more than one former unsympathetic critic, and conditions are at once altered in a generous spirit.

Above all, the young teacher must remember that it is of the first importance not to lose her

enthusiasm for the work. She must keep herself up to date by being in touch with general musical life outside her immediate circle. She should belong to a musical society, and take every opportunity of attending lectures, &c. She should organize musical clubs and meetings among her pupils, and encourage a healthy attitude of kindly criticism.

And, finally, she must be always working at something to do with her own music, for directly she ceases to put herself, from time to time, in the attitude of the learner, she will cease to be a sympathetic and stimulating teacher.

It is a good plan to keep a musical diary, in which our own progress and that of our pupils is recorded, together with notes on current musical events—concerts attended, and so on. Such a record is most useful for reference, and for encouragement in dark hours, when it seems impossible to re-establish a lost sense of proportion.

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AT THE OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS

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